

Washington, DC - Congresswoman Linda Sáncheznchez (CA-39) spoke on the floor of the United States House of Representatives about the national effects of domestic violence. Sánchez focused specifically on the broad reach of domestic violence, its lethal effects, and the need for Congress to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. The text of her speech follows:

"I rise today to show my support for victims of domestic violence. I grew up in a large family -- I am the sixth of seven children -- and my family has always supported me. Nothing can replace the strength you draw from those you love and trust. Tragically, it is even more devastating if family members or significant others violate that trust and become abusive.

Domestic Violence is an enormous problem in this country - one that deserves immediate attention. According to the American College of Emergency Physicians, Domestic violence is the largest cause of injury to women between the ages of 15 and 44 in the United States -- more than car accidents, muggings, and rapes combined.

Each year, between 2 and 4 million women are battered, and 2,000 of those women will die from their injuries. Nearly one third of American women will experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime -- We can no longer afford to ignore this issue.

This year is especially important because 2005 marks the 10th anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Later this year, VAWA will come up for reauthorization. We have the opportunity to provide greater support for domestic violence. I urge all of my colleagues to do their part to support VAWA, to support the efforts of women's advocates, and to end the cycle of violence. Thank you Mr. Speaker."